

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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SS-General Sepp Dietrich - (according to newspaper reports demanded by the Russian Government as a war criminal).

Sepp Dietrich is a talkative man who takes great pleasure in discussing military and technical matters and constantly refers to his 35 years of soldiering in order to evade all political issues. He expresses himself in an original and blunt manner, a form of speech which betrays his working-class origin, and which is not without wit and humour. His criticism leaves little merit with either military or political leaders of the Third Reich. In spite of his sketchy educational background one cannot deny that he possesses, to a certain extent, sound instinct and 'horse sense'.

Pro domo: Dietrich says that he was born a "poor devil" (armer Hund) and that, in his youth, had had to work for an hourly wage of 27 Pfennigs. When the unions, after long and costly strikes, which, of course, were paid for by the workers themselves, finally succeeded in raising the hourly wage by 2 Pfennigs, the cost of living would double soon after. The bad position in which the workers found themselves, led him toward National Socialism, as the Party program contained some points which appealed to him as being very reasonable. If they had been applied correctly, he claims, much good would have been accomplished. He further states that he had been cured completely of this (NS) system in which swindle and graft was rampant, but maintains that something had been done for the working man. "This fellow Ley was an old dreamer (Fantast), but he was good-natured and would not hurt a fly - he only wanted the best for the working-class.

"I have been a member of the Party since 1928 and I intend to stand by it today. I could have put a slug through my brains if I wanted to but I have a responsibility for which I have to make a stand. I want to speak for the men I once led. I never signed any order providing for the massacre of Jews or the burning down of churches, nor have I ever ordered the pillaging of occupied places. I therefore want to clarify things and to stand up for my men."

Opinions

Himmler: "This guy tried to imitate the Fuehrer. His appetite for power just could not be satisfied. On top of this he was a great hand at hoarding and scrounging. He received money from everywhere and everybody. He appropriated all the profits of quarries and water supply projects. He organized this pillage through the foreign branches of the 'Bodenamt' (Soil Control Office). Every SS-leader, starting from the rank of 'Rottenfuehrer' (Cpl.) was made to pay monthly dues to the 'Lebensborn' organization (taking care of the pregnant wives and girl-friends of SS-men). These dues were withheld from the salary. For this swindle they deducted RM 120.00 out of my monthly salary of 1500.00 marks. I had quite a number of rows with Himmler."

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Goering: "He was a lazy bastard, a clown; he held the bag and could do as he pleased. I surely don't wish him anything good."

Ley: "An old dreamer but a good-natured guy who wouldn't harm a fly. He has done a lot for the working man."

General Staff (Fuehrer Headquarters): "Keitel, Model, Buehle and Jodl and all the others had no combat experience. Jodl had never even led a company. Weichs and Wohler lacked likewise in courage to say something. One ought to beat up the whole bunch of 'em. Only Zeitzler knew what was going on; I did a lot for this boy."

Hitler: "He knew even less than the rest. He allowed himself to be taken for a sucker by everyone."

Kaltenbrunner: "He really was a decent fellow who had to do a lot of things he didn't like to do. He had had many a heated argument with Himmler."

Heydrich: "Was a great pig."

Party: "I am an old soldier and had nothing to do with politics. I didn't want my wife to have anything to do with the Party and she didn't even join the NSV (National Socialist Welfare Organization). I knew what the score was and I found the Party machine simply disgusting - at least part of it. I was referring to the time after the Party took over power in Germany. I had never anything to do with Party officials as they didn't interest me in the least."

Pogroms: "That was pure childishness, merely mischievousness on the part of the Hitler Youth which has been stirred up by Schirach."

Hitler's Death: "Killed in action? Impossible, this guy never left his air raid shelter."

At the Fuehrer Headquarters: Dietrich reports that he was received by Hitler one day. He says the following conversation was typical of the questions one was asked at the Fuehrer Headquarters:

"Why were only 30 trains loaded out of the 80 trains which had been placed at your disposal?" - "Because we had to cover 100 kms. to get to the trains, because there wasn't enough time, because it was simply impossible."

"Why is it that the 'Leibstandarte' needed only 57 trains while it formerly required 100 to 120?" - "Because many men were killed, material had been lost and because the rest can be transported with less cars."

Dietrich added: "The Fuehrer was kept misinformed all the time. He was told that so and so many armies are at such and such a place, but he was not told that some 60 to 100,000 men were missing in each army. Of course, one couldn't say anything, one had to be careful; the Gestapo was everywhere; if one only dared open one's mouth and one risked his head. It was maddening. There was only one way in which to get away from these people: One had to play the role of a madman."

The Ardennes Offensive: Commenting on the German offensive in the Ardennes, Dietrich said that it had been a mistake from the

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very beginning and that it had been insufficiently prepared. The German troops lacked fuel, munitions and replacements. During the following retreat he had to blow up 180 tanks alone because of a lack of fuel.

The Offensive in Hungary: Dietrich claims that he had to carry out this offensive against his will and better judgement, as he had known that it had to bog down in the mud. In one single day 132 German tanks bogged down. He claims to have wired back the true picture of the situation, but received orders to go ahead. He was thus forced to send his badly mauled infantry into battle without armored support.

The Defense of Vienna: "Of course, I had orders to defend Vienna to the last. I could not go over to the enemy as I did not want to lose my head. I therefore defended the town; I sent in a division. Well, this division let itself be pushed out of the town again. I didn't hang the 'Stadtkommandant' (town commander) either. That's the way to do it; one doesn't need to surrender."

After the Normandy Landing: Dietrich states that Allied air attacks made any organized resistance impossible. He needed six to eight hours in order to get from corps headquarters to the division because he had to leave his car some 80 to 90 times and look for cover. Only half of the ammunition trains that left Paris ever reached their destination and those needed three days for the trip.

About Russia: Dietrich has a very high opinion of Russia. "A very intelligent people; good-natured, easy to be led and also adapted in technical matters; and on top of that those huge masses. They were poorly led at the beginning but they learnt quickly. These peasants have a lot of brains and are very amenable. Moreover, their tanks were better. They were less complicated and easier to maneuver. Our tanks seemed to have been made by a watchmaker; much too complicated and sensitive. I was really taken aback. These tremendous and modern factories, these agricultural institutions, these granaries - that was simply colossal.

"I once had a talk with Molotov and several GPU officers in Berlin. That was highly interesting. They invited me to visit Russia. Too bad that I never got around to do it. I spoke to many Russians. They liked it better under Stalin than under the Czar. Even the people on the collectives live all right; they own a piece of land, a cow and they live quite happily."

Hans Wallenberg.  
HANS WALLENBERG  
CAPT PWB-CPT

Ernst Langendorf.  
ERNST LANGENDORF  
PWB - CPT